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AUTHOR Blackman, Sandra; Chodorow, Stanley; Ohmann, Richard; Okura, Sandra; Purrington, Sandra Sanchez; Stein, Robert

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ABSTRACT

This paper records three plenary sessions held at the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) National Education Conference, August 27-29, 1993. The conference built on what was learned in the first year of the project and reported in ACLS Occasional Paper 20. Sessions allowed participants to talk with colleagues who had been project participants in the previous year. The three sessions included: (1) "Humanities and the Public Schools: Perspectives from Inside the ACLS Project" (Richard Ohmann) which focused on the role of humanities, of education in general, in a post-Cold War world; (2) "Panel Discussion on School-Based Curriculum Development" (Sandra Blackman; Sandra Okura; Sandra Sanches Purrington; Robert Stein) which discusses the process of curriculum development in the schools ; and (3) "Transformations in the Humanities" (Stanley Chodorow) which examined the contemporary condition of the humanities and the changes in both the methods of study and the objects of study that have occurred over the past few decades. (EH)

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PERSPECTIVES ON THE HUMANITIES AND SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

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The ACLS National Education Conference, which was held at the Aspen Institute, August 27-29, 1993, was the second beginning-of-the-year conference of the ACLS Elementary and Secondary Schools Teacher Curriculum Development Project. The first, held at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens, was the subject of an earlier paper in this series (ACLS Occasional Paper No. 20). The Aspen Conference brought together teacher-fellows from the Boulder Valley, Brookline, Cambridge, Cherry Creek, Denver, and Weld school districts; their team members; other representatives of those districts, including building and district administrators; university-based facilitators; post-secondary fellows from the 1992-93 fellowship year; and other guests.

The conference was designed to build on what we had learned in the first year of the project. There were sessions that allowed various groupings of the participants to talk with colleagues who had been project participants in the previous year, and sessions where plans were made at the national, regional, and school level to support 1993-94 activities. There were three plenary sessions, of which this paper is a record. Professor Richard Ohmann, of Wesleyan University, spoke about the role of the humanities, of education in general, in a post-Cold War world. A panel of four elementary and secondary school educators spoke about the process of curriculum development in the schools. Two of them, Sandra Blackman, of Marston Middle School in San Diego, and Sandra Okura, of the Humanitas program in Los Angeles, had been ACLS teacher-fellows in 1992-93. The other panelists were Sandra Sanchez Purrington, a member of the ACLS project's advisory committee, who is principal of E. J. Martinez Elementary School in Santa Fe, and Dr. Robert Stein, the panel's moderator, who is chief education officer at O'Farrell Community School in San Diego. Dean Stanley Chodorow, of the University of California, San Diego, spoke at the third plenary session about the contemporary condition of the humanities and the changes in both the methods of study and the objects of study that have occurred over the past few decades.

Michael Holzman

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Humanities and the Public Schools: Perspectives from Inside the ACLS Project

Richard Ohmann
Wesleyan University

At the Rancho Mirage Institute last summer [1993], I listened to teacher fellows from Los Angeles, Minnesota, and Cambridge-Brookline (I had to miss the San Diego report) review their work of the previous year. These are some of the main issues they discussed:

• What texts are important to teach? How are they related to the traditional canon? Where did that canon come from? What parts of our whole culture does it represent or leave out? How should it be revised, for a more inclusive understanding? What should be added and left out? How do we connect new entries to older traditions and texts?

• There was a widely shared assumption that in a multicultural society learning should be culturally complex, that it should admit many voices, experiences, and perspectives. Participants criticized not only the literary canon, but the conventional presentation of history, as monocultural or Eurocentric, in its identification of our society with its origins in Puritan settlements, the founding fathers, and so on.

• Most participants agreed on the importance of bringing students' varied cultures into the curriculum, through oral history and related strategies. They also saw a danger in this approach, that of celebrating only the culturally particular, and of essentializing each subculture or cultural mix—the "ethnicity of the month" approach, as one person called it. How to locate identities and cultures in the whole social process? How to cherish difference yet find common ground?

• There was a widespread wish to bring forward in the humanities women's experiences, women's voices, women's history, and to make gender a main category of inquiry and understanding. Some also advocated teaching and learning about sexuality—at the very least recognizing that many of our students are, and many of our writers have been, lesbian or gay, and not hiding that experience behind a tacit idea of the "normal."

• Some urged that the humanities take account of popular cultural forms, and integrate their study with the study of high culture, as in the Minnesota "history cans," that included newspaper writing, popular song, documents from working class movements, and so on, along with canonical texts and forms.

• Teacher-fellows called for more than recognizing the variety of our cultural experience. They wanted critical pedagogies that explore how the very categories we use to grasp experience and identity—high, popular, normal, queer, straight, black, white, Latino, masculine, feminine—are made and remade on the field of culture, rather than being given as facts of nature.

• I heard much about such pedagogies: for instance, about inviting students to take initiatives in choosing emphases, projects, and texts to bring what is important in their lives into their school learning. How to do that critically, teachers wondered: how to respect students' interests and experiences without yielding to the mistrust of intellectual life endemic in our society?

I am pleased to see how much common ground there is among university and public school teachers. To note these shared interests and aims, though, also forces recognition that many teachers of the humanities in schools and colleges share something else, the hostility and suspicion of powerful groups in our society: of educational conservatives, of some on the political right, of mass media pundits, of many but not all religious fundamentalists. Much of what the ACLS participants are up to has, like many projects of university humanists, come under extraordinary fire recently in widely broadcast attacks on multiculturalism and "political correctness." The charges are all too familiar: that multiculturalism amounts to erosion of "the" western tradition; to denigration of the good and the beautiful and a subversion of values in general; to a privileging of the third rate, a campaign for ignorance, and a denigration of capital "C" culture. Its corollary, in this view, is "political correctness," which puts the very possibility of civilized discourse under siege and enforces a tyranny of newspeak and censorship.

Not that there's nothing here to criticize: a "PC" moralism that sometimes amounts to little more than a politics of words and gestures; a rigid multiculturalism that sees every culture as self-enclosed, pure, and knowable only to its members, so that learning and critique are all but impossible. But so much more comes under assault, including much that is fresh and interesting and democratic in humanistic scholarship and teaching. Why has this happened now? What is the historical conjuncture in which we gather to pursue this project?

Here is one thought I have been exploring: that with the fall of the USSR and of "actually existing socialism" almost everywhere, the durable forms of Cold War battle have quickly become antiquated. Of what use now in galvanizing domestic reaction is the anticommunism

that was the air we breathed for forty years and more? With dissidence pried loose from any illusion of links to the evil empire, the task of maintaining the status quo in the U.S. must find a new basis. When internal challenges to domination and privilege can no longer be understood as communist subversion, the right and many not on the right turn to an assault on social movements that have in fact grown more and more separate since 1970, when "the" movement began to lose what coherence it had, and many of its constituent groups veered toward identity politics. The right has picked up on that change in the forms of dissidence, and has mounted one assault after another on entitlements won in the 1960s and 1970s: on affirmative action, women's rights, gay rights, children's rights, workers' rights. On the ideological front this strategy materialized just after world socialism began to crumble, in the attack on multiculturalism and political correctness.

Let me take that conjecture as a bridge to three others, about the world-historical changes of the last five years, and the bearing they may have on work in the humanities. First, in spite of the forces arrayed against identity politics, issues of racial and ethnic and sexual identity will continue to sit high on our agenda, and the fall of the Soviet Union will make them more heated and volatile. We see in the Balkans, in Central Europe, in the republics of the former USSR, an eruption of ethnic hostilities and national claims unmatched since at least the mid-nineteenth century; they find parallels in similar divisions from India to South Africa, from Spain to Britain to Canada. Nationalism seems now the privileged mode of popular assertion, even as established nation states lose their autonomy. The great movements of people across national boundaries, following the imperatives of the flexible labor market, are augmented by movements of refugees. The United States is more a nation of immigrants now than at any time since the immigration law of 1924 shut down earlier migrations. New ethnicities gather; some old ones regroup as their homeland counterparts struggle for nationhood (Ukrainian, Croat, Serb, Lithuanian). Black Americans and other groups seen as racially different continue to face repression, discrimination, and the hard choice whether to resist in separatist or integrationist terms. Gay and lesbian people are finding more of a voice and forming more of a political and educational movement. Asian-American Studies appears alongside Afro-American Studies, Chicano studies, women's studies. All these movements overlap with and enter into the humanities. Multiculturalism will be with us for quite some time, its forms changed in ways I can't predict by the global surge of ethnicity.

Second, the end of the Cold War itself changes everything in this country. Most of the talk about this has been happy talk—the liberation of peoples, the release from fear of nuclear war, the peace dividend; and I do not want to spoil anyone's evening by cynically refusing the grounds for hope. But I do want to flag some questions about the peace dividend and its potential for diverting money to education. I wonder. For decades the peacetime military, the Cold War military, has not just been a drain on the economy: it has been a site of knowledge production, an alternative educational system, and a place where very many young people have jobs, who otherwise might join the reserve army of the unemployed. The expanding proportion of young people in universities and the lengthening period of their stay have served the same purpose, and helped adjust the labor market to the boom—and bust—cycle. Were the army and other services to spill a million or so people back into private economy, along with those laid off from military production, would the colleges be able to absorb the surplus?

As for the public schools and public universities, one thing is clear: the taxpayer revolts that dotted our landscape in the 1980s and gathered into a national strategy of the Republican Party have set in place a massive reluctance to pay for education, and widened the "savage inequalities" of Jonathan Kozol's recent book. Now, the old Sputnik rationale for strengthening American education is gone with the Cold War. Gone, too, is the Cold War rationale for deficit spending, as we heard quite explicitly in the 1992 political campaign. A Ross Perot commercial said, "the enemy is not the red flag of communism but the red ink of the national debt," and the other candidates gave at least lip service to that principle. If anything like the sacrifice that Perot and many businessmen call for in the interest of debt reduction should come about, it's hard to see how funding for the work we do can remain at even its present skimpy level.

Third, at the same time, a different rationale for policy comes forward with the fall of the Soviet Union, filling up space occupied by the old one, but doing so with needs and ideas that will not play out in the same way at all. Our competition now is not the Soviet behemoth, but resurgent Europe, invincible Japan, the Asian gang of four, soon China. And the competition is not military but quintessentially economic. The very national interest has been purified, distilled to its innocent, 1920s form: the business of America is business. To be sure, perils to the national interest remain here and there around the globe, and we can expect clean little wars now and then to fight back tyranny, "restore democracy," and defend oil or the like. But mainly the national interest

will be spelled out in terms of productivity, competitiveness, efficiency, technological development, and so on.

Where will the humanities be borne by such imperatives? I can hardly guess; but I note that in the legislative and political arenas, the economic rationale for education reigns almost without challenge. Already in 1989, the education President stated just four goals of his education bill:

I believe that greater educational achievement promotes sustained economic growth, enhances the Nation's competitive position in world markets, increases productivity, and leads to higher incomes for everyone.

That's it. I don't think that the Democrats' understanding of education's task is much different; nor in fact is that of Albert Shanker. We are not talking here about citizenship in a democracy or about timeless values, but about economic measures of success. Thus, the increased pressure toward vocationalism, against humanities and the liberal arts, for instance, the sharp rise of college courses in technical, business, and professional writing. Some of the work we and you do is already, in effect, subcontracting for business. But that is not enough. We don't do enough for profits that business is willing to consign to the educational system the task of matching knowledge and skills to the job system. Business is giving less to public education. It is doing more education internally ($50 million a year at Ford, $30 million dollars at GM, and so on and on). Why not? If the only interest is the competitiveness of American business, why not educate just the workers you need in just the ways you need? Why pay for literature and history? If South Carolina can attract a new BMW plant partly by offering to supply the company with pre-trained workers—as recently happened—isn't such an expenditure of state funds more obviously beneficial than increasing support for the state university system or for humanities in the schools?

Privatization moves on quickly in another way, too. We have all been hearing about Whittle Communications and its Channel 1—required viewing, commercials and all, for about eight million students. Now comes Whittle's Edison Project, backed mainly by Time-Warner and a British media firm, and headed by former Yale president Benno Schmidt, planning as many as a thousand for-profit schools within a decade. Should the voucher system become a reality, of course, it would open wide the education market for private investment. I'm not sure what the place of the humanities might be in this new environment.

If I am right in these conjectures, three things follow. First, teachers of the humanities are inextricably caught up in debates that drive national and global politics, now and for some time to come. I reject the idea that our work is nothing but political, but it can't be non-political. Too much is at stake, including democracy. Second, the economic pressure on education is intense and will probably become worse. Funding will be meagre. We will be urged to be productive, practical, efficient, vocational. The climate for broadening the principles of humanistic education is inclement.

But third, our society has never needed more than it does now the kind of vision and critical thinking offered, at their best, by the humanities and by public education. The old socialist vision is moribund. The Cold War "triumph" of capitalism has produced no new vision, and many new fears about the tired old one of endless economic growth, for the "haves" of the nation and the world. What better place than the humanities to stimulate vision, to begin imagining a new direction for history, that might lead toward friendly cohabitation of the world's peoples on this beleaguered planet?

Note: Portions of this text are adapted from an article appearing in *Radical Teacher* 44.

Panel Discussion on School-Based Curriculum Develoment

Sandra Blackman, Marston Middle School, San Diego;
Sandra Okura, Humanitas, Los Angeles;
Sandra Sanchez Purrington, E.J. Martinez Elementary School, Santa Fe; and
Robert Stein, O'Farrell Community School, San Diego, Chair

Robert Stein: I'd like to tell you a little bit about what we talked about when we were preparing this panel, why we wanted to talk about it, and what it has to do with teaching and learning, if anything.

The four people on this panel spend their days, as most of you do, with kids, and we're concerned. We're frustrated and especially those of us in urban education, we are concerned about the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The one thing that connects people here tends to be a passion for teaching. It also appears to be the one thing that might save America. Truly, children might learn better, succeed more frequently, if those of us who had been empowered to educate the children for the country believe we can do it. In San Diego this is the wonderful reality: we are multi-racial, multicultural, and multi-linguistic. The racism is there, it hasn't gone away; and poverty and oppression are there, they haven't gone away; and the plight of urban America hasn't gone away. But, in spite of this, it is incredible to see empowered teachers who believe they can teach all children. You can just feel that from people, and we felt that as we prepared this session. My teachers say, "To meet is to be," because we've spent so much time simply meeting and reflecting, and meeting teacher-as-scholar and teacher-as-researcher is an awesome experience in rooms and auditoriums and breakout rooms, and restaurants and coffee shops. You wonder, "Where are the children? When will I have time to teach?"

So we want to talk to you from the heart. And so Sandra, and Sandra, and Sandra, will share whatever they passionately wish to share about their experiences in collaboration—their experiences at high schools and elementary schools and middle schools.

The process we've decided on is to allow my colleagues to take a piece of time to share their experiences, their frustrations, their activities, their learning, their creations with you. And then we want you to interact with us, to ask good questions, and to pose ideas and to share ideas.

Our first sharer, my colleague, is Sandra Okura from Humanitas in Los Angeles, California.

Sandra Okura: What I want to talk about with you today is interdisciplinary instruction and team teaching; not focusing on the curricular issues, though they are important, but focusing instead on the human aspects of the humanities. I'd like to start by talking a little bit about my own background and experience. When I began teaching about 11 years ago, I started under very difficult conditions. I was hired on an emergency credential. I was given a schedule that included five different preparations and that asked me to travel among five different classrooms. So after that first year, I decided that teaching was probably not going to be my life-time career. But someone told me at that time, that while teaching never gets easy, it does get easier after five years. So I thought, okay, I'm going to hang in here and try to get the hang of this and I'll use five years as sort of my indicator and see how I'm doing at that point. Well, five years passed, and I still hadn't gotten the hang of teaching yet. But true to my colleague's word, things were getting easier—fights were no longer breaking out in my classroom, or, at least, not as often. I was becoming more comfortable teaching certain novels and plays and stories and poems, and I thought that it was really neat that I had amassed about two file cabinets worth of drama exercises and compositions I draw from. So yes, the job was getting easier.

But at the same time, things were changing. The numbers in my classroom were growing to the point where I had 45 students in a tenth grade English class. It was getting harder and harder to find complete sets of books to issue to my students. The students themselves were changing: in that murmur and undercurrent of voices before the bell rang I would hear Spanish, Korean, Persian, Armenian, Russian, in addition to English. I myself was changing. I didn't realize that I had stopped reading for pleasure—stopped reading things that stimulated me as a scholar, as an individual. At the ACLS conference in Rancho Mirage last June [1993], one of the speakers, Milbrey McLaughlin, mentioned that two-thirds of all teachers do not feel effective in the classroom, and I think that I was becoming one of those teachers. If circumstances had not changed, I might have left teaching.

But circumstances did change. About three years ago I became involved in an interdisciplinary program in Los Angeles called Humanitas. I volunteered to form a team with three other teachers at my school—an art teacher, a history teacher, and a biology teacher. Our four classes would constitute four of the six classes that about 80 students would

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go to each day, and the four of us would meet together to plan our curriculum, interdisciplinarily, to unite our four classes, thematically, which was no easy task with that biology component. Before we began that first year, we met intensively over that summer and then we met on a daily basis throughout that entire first year. We met after school, on Fridays, to debrief at a happy hour. We even gave up our Monday holidays of three-day weekends at times that first year to keep ourselves together. Working in a team situation required a lot more of me than I expected. But I have no regrets about my decision; that decision really transformed me.

The first change I underwent was realizing that I had to throw out the way I had been teaching American literature, and that was the healthiest thing I could have done. In order to align myself thematically with my colleagues, I had to start approaching American literature with very new perspectives from very new angles. I no longer felt isolated. People at my school used to call me the Queen of Mole People because I never came out of my classroom. But then it became very exciting to be collaborating with my teammates, because I knew that as I was talking about, say, multicultural issues in my classroom, my students were discussing the same issues but from historical, artistic, even scientific points of view in other classrooms. It made so much more sense to break down the artificial confines of 55-minute periods of English, history, art, and biology taught in a void. I think as teachers we want our students to synthesize what they learn in all the different classes, in all the different subjects. I found that this process that I was involved in better supported that than the traditional approach to literature that I was accustomed to.

Finally, for myself, for the first time in a long time, I felt creative. I was excited to be involved in the creation of something brand new, something meaningful and important. It was stimulating to sit around with my teammates and just bounce ideas around and to see new ideas and new perspectives that I had never considered, and a fringe benefit was that I learned more about art and biology and history than I knew before.

But as I talk about the benefits of team teaching, of teacher collaboration, I need to talk about the benefits not only for the teachers, but also for the students. With the emphasis on interdisciplinary instruction, our priority was to get the kids away from rote memorization, to critical thinking and making connections among the different classes. The kids hated it. Many students had built entire careers on rote memorization. I remember one kid who pleaded with me: "Oh please don't make me do this." "This," I think, means "think." He said, "Just tell

me what to memorize and I'll memorize it." In the second semester of that first year, I had an epiphany of sorts. In the middle of a class discussion a student raised his hand and said, "But last semester Mr. Arreola said . . . ." I blanked and I didn't hear what he said next because something very significant had just happened. Not only was this student referring to something from the beginning part of the preceding semester, but he was bringing something in from his biology class that was relevant to our discussion in American literature. And at that moment, I knew that we were doing something right.

I don't know how your school-site teams will be structured this coming year or if you and your teammates will have a shared group of students the way we did, but there is one other benefit that I want to talk about with you. I mentioned how rote memorization is a survival tool for some students. So is invisibility. Especially when classes get as large as I've mentioned before. There are students who camp out in the back of the room to hide, or if they're really tricky they sit right in front of you. And they just slip by. When we went out recruiting students for our program, we went looking for the invisible kid. Not the football star, not the AP/Honors kid, but the kid with no group identity. Those are the kids we had in our classes. And initially, once again, they hated us; they hated the program, they were comfortable with invisibility. But now they had four teachers who knew them, who talked about them when they weren't there, and they were with the same classmates for four hours each day.

Once again, by the second semester we began to see changes. We began to see the creation of family dynamics. The students began to feel safe in this environment. Some of the hard core gang kids began to actually physically soften. Some people noted that we were like an alternative to gangs. The students began to feel very special; they wanted to create a logo and design T-shirts. I guess the strongest indicator to me that this was a real positive thing for them was that traditionally when students graduate from high school they sign their name, "Cesar Lopez, Class of '92.'" These students were signing their yearbooks "Cesar Lopez, Humanitas Class of '92." This was the group that they belonged to.

It was suggested that we panelists present information that is useful and succinct and easy to remember. So in extracting a few key suggestions for establishing teacher teams, teacher communities, I decided that I would present the ABC's of Teacher Team Building.

• *Adios, autonomy.* As you form your teams, understand that from the outset you've committed yourself to a huge investment of your personal time. There is no other way to collaborate with other people other than

putting a lot of time into it. You are also giving up, I think, authority over your subject area. You are inviting other people, literally, into your classroom, into your domain, as you begin to collaborate with others.

• *Be brave.* I have a quotation here from Larry Wilson of the Pecos Learning Center, that says, "If you always do what you've always done, you'll always get what you always got." I encourage you as you look ahead to the coming year to throw the old out, to be innovative and adventurous and creative as you develop interdisciplinary curricular programs for your school.

• I heard that there were going to be some administrators here, so this one's for you. *Common time.* These teachers need time, and it's not fair to require them to be meeting on their own time altogether. Please accommodate them by providing the time necessary for them.

• This one I had to stretch. *Desire diversity.* I'll be real candid with you, the L.A. team last year got off to a really rocky start, because we were so diverse. We were very different from each other in values and goals and pedagogies, and it caught us off guard, I think, because we came in thinking we were all Humanitas teachers and yet we were all very different. I think that the differences can be very valuable if we honor them and explore them. So take a lot of time to recognize the different individual strengths that each member of your team can contribute.

• *Encourage each other.* This is a primary benefit of teacher communities. Take advantage of it. Unfortunately, in many workplaces innovation and risk taking are not welcomed or honored. Opportunity, such as the one that ACLS has provided you with this year, may be viewed more with envy than with respect by some of your colleagues, so be a strong source of support for each other.

• Finally, *fun, fun, fun.* Humor is a vital element in the creative process. Laughing, kidding, and joking create an atmosphere where people feel safe in sharing new ideas. Often real creativity is being expressed in humorous remarks, and quite possibly what initially was offered as a joke might end up being a significant idea.

I want to wish all of the teachers, the teacher-fellows, and their school-site members, the best of luck in the coming year. I hope my comments have been encouraging to you as you begin to see the benefits that creative collaboration will hold for both you and for your students.

Robert Stein: Thank you, Sandra. If Sandra stimulated a question, lock it in your memory bank or jot it down because we'll get back to it. Sandra, thank you—that was excellent.

I would like to go to our next discussant, Sandra Blackman.

Sandra Blackman: I am an ACLS teacher-fellow from the San Diego City School District from last year. I am ecstatic to be in the middle between my esteemed colleagues from the elementary and the high school levels of the teaching profession. This gives me the advantage of not having to be the first nor the last, kind of like our middle school students. Like the middle school child I feel a sense of freedom in having learned enough to get by in the real world, but not having experienced so much that I have become jaded about life or learning.

I think the American Council of Learned Societies took a great risk in asking me to speak today, because I am not a scholar in the higher education sense and I am not a professional speaker. I'm a middle school level English teacher and because of last year's studies, I will become a humanities teacher next year.

When I first learned that I would have an opportunity to speak with a group of educators who were about to embark on a similar adventure provided by the American Council of Learned Societies I was euphoric, because this meant that we in the San Diego group of 12 fellows would have a forum where we could share what worked and what didn't work for us last year. In this way you will have a tremendous advantage and can build upon our foundations. I suppose that this is similar to child rearing: the second child usually reaps the benefits of the mistakes bestowed upon the first by its well-intentioned parents. After deep reflection about this past year's experience and before I share this year's project with you, I have some initial advice for your year with ACLS, which I will share through the following analogy:

In San Diego we have a game called Over the Line. I don't know if any of you know that game or not, but this game is played in the sand in bare feet with only three people on a team. It looks a little bit like baseball except that you do not run the bases and you try to hit the ball over the line. The organization that runs this tournament, which draws over 250,000 people each year and has over 1,000 teams whose names are so highly entertaining that the event cannot be televised for public television, is called OMBAC. OMBAC stands for Old Mission Beach Athletic Club or, as some of us prefer, Old Men Behaving As Children. OMBAC has signs posted above each of its sessions at the tournament that read "No dumb shit questions." Most people, fearing that any question might be considered dumb, don't ask any questions at all, which is the idea.

Before we embarked on this ACLS project last year, our three-person teams at our school site were a bit like the game of Over the Line. Someone would toss in an idea, we would try and hit it over the line into the field, most often unsuccessfully. We didn't have a strategy to implement the good ideas. Last year, when I sat where you are today, I had a lot of what I thought were dumb questions. I didn't even know what ACLS was, if you can imagine that. Or, and this is really embarrassing, I didn't know what it meant to be politically correct. I used to harrass my male team members unmercifully, but now I know it's not politically correct. So we're going to lose a lot of fun next year, I guess.

Anyway, I should explain that when I came from Canada I had a gender border crossing to overcome for myself, because I considered all male teachers really lazy. When I came here the first thing that happened was my principal teamed me with a male teacher, which had never occurred to me before, and from that experience it broke down a bit. I have a great deal of respect for the male teachers on our school-site now, having worked with these two men.

One of my colleagues is older, ready to retire, but he still has a few years to go if I don't burn him out before then. My other colleague is just in from college, and he's still wet behind the ears. And so these are my team members, and not only do we have adjoining rooms—it's kind of kinky—but we have doors that open to our adjoining rooms. We have a lot of fun with this. The team is fondly known as Sandra and the old fart and the young stud.

When I first emigrated to this country, every morning, I'd charge into the teacher's lounge at 6:30 a.m. and ask my other colleague there — the only other colleague there at that hour — "dumb" questions like:

- What is SDTA? (San Diego Teachers Association);
- What is UCSD?
- What's a gang?
- What are colors?
- Why do we have 40 students in each class instead of 25?
- Why don't students stand when they're answering a question?

I kept apologizing to this teacher for my dumb questions, but he kept answering them anyway, and that's how I learned to be a teacher in San Diego. And he became one of my teammates.

Last year, as a teacher-fellow, I groped around in the fog for a long time because I was too intimidated to ask questions. My advice to you is to please take advantage of the three Sandras at the sessions that

follow this one to ask any candid burning questions that might clarify things for you next year.

This brings me to our topic, Collaborative Curriculum Development by Teachers. In our ACLS project last year, we had 12 teacher-fellows who were attending a weekly workshop at UCSD and taking a variety of courses of personal interest. As we understood it, the first semester was to be devoted to research and development at the university, and writing humanities curricula was to be a collaborative process. The second semester was to be devoted to piloting our specific curriculum on a school-site with our interdisciplinary team. I interpreted this to mean that the teacher-fellows should bring back to our colleagues new perspectives that we had learned that we could share with our pals and pilot at our school site. (Some of us didn't even have teams on our site and had to develop these, which was tough.) Our school, Marston Middle, had the good fortune to have three teams of varying degrees of experience, ranging from advanced to novice: 10 teachers all together. The major problem for us was how to go about implementing current scholarly ideas in a collaborative fashion, and how to formalize the process, because we were to end up with some sort of product to share with the other ACLS project districts at the spring conference.

As you are well aware, the greatest constraints upon teachers when writing curriculum collaboratively is time. So in an effort to streamline the process, I designed a procedure which our interdisciplinary teams could use to plan, implement, and evaluate each of the pilots. I'd like to have it noted here that our teams of teachers were implementing several new humanities units to study, but that we selected only one to actually formalize (one team ended up doing two pilots anyway).

With all of the other projects we had going, we were able to complete from beginning to end four pilots: one pilot every two months. Each pilot consisted of a teacher-identified set of humanities criteria, which is important to establish initially: teacher and student pre- and post-surveys, and student pre- and post-candid assessments as documentation for student portfolios or exhibitions.

Our reasoning for such detailed documentation was that, besides the product for ACLS and the school district, all 10 participants could use the documentation for multiple purposes such as personal teacher professional growth, presentation at state or district conferences, or applications for funding. Of course, the bottom line was immediate implementation from the university to the students. We wanted to take what we were learning, make that scholarly connection, and we wanted to share that with the students.

One teacher was able to use the material as part of her personal portfolio in successfully competing for a position in Portland. Another, who was squeaky clean from college, won a summer school employment opportunity using the material. All 10 teachers used the product for presentations at various conferences. The materials you see are not slickly polished; there may be all kinds of mistakes in them; but they represent ownership for the teachers.

There are actually two major documents that we wrote. The first was used as a proposal for State of California funding for $90,000, for which we were successful. This funding will allow us to become a dissemination school. I'm still not too sure what that is yet, but when I talked to my mother, who grew up barefoot in Manitoba during the Depression, she said that she thought it sounded like a process of fertilization. Maybe that's it. Anyway, as you will see from this document, the whole piloting thing was an evolution which was pretty interesting in itself because it demonstrates the gradual influence the university seminars and courses had over the curriculum. The first pilot, for instance, seems pretty trivial to me now. It was focused around the theme of "How can I have control over my life and improve relationships with my family and others," using a piece of core literature in eighth grade called *My Brother Sam Is Dead*. The emphasis is pedagogically based around action-based learning strategies. Each successive pilot became more and more meaty until the final pilot addressed the theme of "How do I formulate my beliefs?" using the topic of Westward expansion and its effect on Native American culture. It uses as a primary source the letter by Virginia Reed from *Ordeal by Hunger*; "Indians Aren't Mascots" from the Shamanic News published in Los Angeles; and *The Earth Did Not Devour Him (. . . Y no se lo trago la tierra)* by Thomas Rivera. A Social Studies subtopic was "racism as an attempt at systematic annihilation of native cultures."

All of us at our school site felt that without some sort of guideline like this piloting process, we would never have been able to work together efficiently and effectively in order to implement our new humanities curriculum. In our university seminars, I read many books addressing issues of political correctness, border crossings, gender balance, contact zones, and multicultural studies, to name a few. I would bring these books back to my school site and we would use the ideas in one way or another. Our science teacher particularly liked *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* by Mary Louise Pratt, which includes many intriguing accounts of points of view of the Other in contact zones during exploration. In fact we already use several of the novels which we all agreed would bring new perspectives

to our students, such as the *True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle*, the story of a heroine in a boy's book; *Equiano's Travels*, the autobiography of Olaudah Equiano written in 1789 about his experiences as a slave and then a free man; *The Land I Lost*, the story about a youngster's experiences with animals while growing up in the jungles of Viet Nam; and *The Legend of La Larona* by Adolfo Anaya. We actually ordered some of these in class sets and we're using them in our curriculum.

The year of university connection brought us face to face with the reality that we had lost touch with our scholarship. We had become primarily focused on pedagogy. Next year our teams, with the assistance of some additional ACLS funds, will continue to pilot humanities units which we plan collaboratively, and we are gratefully thankful for this opportunity to keep a good thing going. Also next year, I will start Marston's four reading workshop forums with 15 or 20 teachers at our site. We are going to discuss books from a reading list that we may wish to incorporate into our curriculum. I'm modeling it after our UCSD seminars. Also, for those of you who are forming new teams at your site, I have brought a video here called "An Integrated and Interdisciplinary Curriculum," and a facilitator's guide, which may be useful if there are any administrators here, or any teachers who will be taking other teachers at your school-site through a workshop of collaborative curriculum development. This facilitator's guide would take a group of teachers in a workshop through an actual process of curriculum development.

Since my time is limited, I'll share any other details you may wish at our Middle Schools meeting later. However, part of the joy of the project for me has been to mingle with educators from all levels, and I look forward to conversation with all of you. So please stop me at any time to talk, but please be polite and answer any dumb questions I might have as though you think they are the most profound utterances you have ever ever entertained. Thank you.

Robert Stein: Thank you Sandra. And, again, if you have some questions, as Sandra mentioned, we will be breaking up into people of like groups and levels and you will have some opportunities to probe deeper than we can in a few moments.

And now it's my honor to introduce Sandra Sanchez Purrington.

Sandra Sanchez Purrington: I am going to have two disclaimers during the course of my conversation here with you. Here comes the first one: I am not now nor have I ever been an ACLS scholar. I have

been a teacher and an administrator for the last 32 years in the public school systems. Some in New York, but mainly in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Last night Bob Stein actually stumped me with the question: "What is the aspect of your work that you feel most passionate about?" As a teacher over a considerable length of time, I have gotten to feel very passionate about a lot of things. In the last 32 years I have been through only books, no books; very into learning, no classes; no grades, formal grades; I have been through every movement that has come down the line in changing education, hopefully to make it better for children. Until this present movement, I have not found one that was long lasting or really relevant to children in the classroom situation.

So I had to think a lot, and I realized that the true passion that I have today is school renewal, and that my true passionate belief about this issue is that the arts and humanities are best suited to drive this renewal in a way that will result in educational, not structural reform. I think that is what this project is about.

I'd like to share an experience that happened at a school which was not an ACLS project school. It's Sweeney Elementary School in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The sum total of this monumental experience is in two booklets that were published by the staff a year apart. These booklets were generated by staff people; they were not generated by administrators or curriculum specialists. These represent teachers feeling passionately about their work.

One might ask why: why do I show you these booklets? These booklets represented for Sweeney Elementary School the shift from a school that was examining itself and getting what it always got, to a school that was really examining itself and producing a new environment for students. It was shifting from schooling that valued time, duration, and standard texts to education that is personal: students involved in what they are doing, and teachers involved in facilitating the education of students. It was going from texts in isolation to texts in context, and a child was part of that context. It was also going from teachers and students who were being acted upon, to teachers and students who are becoming actors in the process of education.

Here's my second disclaimer. At the school, which was a school that did not have an administration, it was not true that we did not have leadership. We had leadership, but we had a different concept of what that leadership meant. Leadership did not mean power for us. Leadership meant scholarship, someone who knew some way to help us out in a situation. We used to call it leadership on a cart (as in those

audiovisual carts). You put the leadership on the cart and you say, "What needs to be done and which one of us can do it best?" You figure that out, and then you say, "Alright. This is yours. You lead this project because you have the tools that we need. When that's over, please pass it to the next person who needs it because they have the tools that we may need to solve another issue." I was called a "facilitator," but that was very long for students and also for teachers, so I also became known as "the f-word lady"—which had many interpretations!

Sweeney Elementary School was for us a very large school. It is K-6, 750 students. We had, on paper, every excuse to sit back and say "Well, we could do a better job, if they sent us better students." We had 67 percent Hispanic; we had 3 percent Native American students; and 30 percent of those things that we call in New Mexico, Anglo, whatever that is. Two hundred and thirty of those 750 students were LEP, Limited English Proficiency students. These were tested students who could not comfortably handle school English. Ninety of those 230 were indeed monolingual, in Spanish. Seventy-five percent of our students were on free and reduced lunch. Our test scores were a bit low. We have a process in Santa Fe, New Mexico, which is aimed at school improvement by doing the following: You take the test, the test results come back, they publish the test scores in the newspaper, and they say "This is the best school because it has the highest test scores. This is the worst school because it has the worst test scores." Guess where we were? We were the worst school for five years. We were desperate, the teachers were working as hard as they could. My mother, who is Hispanic, has this little thing that I love and never correct. She says, "You know I'm doing the best I can't." And that's exactly what we were doing.

We had remediation out the ears. We had every Chapter; we had every Program; we had extra teachers; we had everything going, and it wasn't working. Did you ever see someone respond to someone who doesn't speak their language, and they say, "It's down the street and around the corner and up the stairs," and the person looks at them uncomprehendingly, and then they say (yelling), "IT'S DOWN THE STREET, AROUND THE CORNER, AND UP THE STAIRS." We were shouting at children; we were doing over and over again what didn't work the first time. So, at a staff meeting, someone said, "Well, why don't we just throw all this stuff out." And it was then that the light bulb went on.

Now, we were also fortunate that during that same time as the light bulb, we were involved with the Panasonic Foundation, and that brought us access to people from the outside, people who could help

us to clarify our own goals and visions. What we came up with during that year is that if we were really going to reach our students, we had become a learning community, which meant everyone in that school had to learn, including the teachers, the parents, the community business people, and the student; and that meant developing an interdisciplinary, thematic, multi-age, full inclusion program.

Now if we were to do that little thing, we could improve! We were very frightened and we said, "Now wait a minute. Before we go doing all of this with 750 students (since we don't have the training and all of the information), let's try a model. Let's do something that we feel is necessary anyway."

One of the things that we were most concerned about was that our students would make gains during the year and in the summer they would lose it. Then they'd come back the next year and have to make the same gains. We said we wanted to try a summer school—there was no summer school policy—a summer school that is interdisciplinary and thematic. "Let's try it out, see what the difficulties are, and then we can think about doing this for the school."

We had to challenge policy there because there isn't a summer school for elementary students in Santa Fe. Therefore, there's no money; there's no precedent. "What are you going to do about a custodian? How are you going to get your building open? Who's going to pay the liability insurance for a program like this? Where are you going to get your leadership? Are you going to have a principal for your summer school? How are you going to pay for all of this?" The second issue was that there was no curriculum written for such a program. And finally, the third issue was that there was no real study as to how we were going to deliver this instruction so that we didn't repeat the shouting process at our students.

I can tell you that we funded this first year in a very innovative way—we begged for it! We figured that it would cost us $250 per child for a four-week summer school program. And every teacher, every teacher, pledged themselves to find two sponsors, and we did. We got on the phone and called our friends, and we said, "Would you sponsor a child?" And we raised $250 for each of the 20 children that we accepted to summer school.

That was, I think, the thing that galvanized the staff more than anything; that we really did create something that wasn't there before! It showed us that: 1) you can do it, and 2) when you work together in concert, it's amazing what you can do.

The summer school program did not benefit all of the teachers. We hired six teachers out of our staff, and one teacher to be the facilitator of the summer school.

That first year we learned a lot. We learned that kind of program was possible. We learned that students actually loved being in something awful called summer school. We learned that the parents became involved in the summer school because they were also seeing the change in their child.

The first year we took volunteers. The second year is represented in this little booklet—it was done with our mimeograph machine; it has a nice little paper cover which we made and we stapled together. In the booklet is the philosophy of the summer school, which then became the philosophy of our school.

When we discovered that this kind of program really worked, we started a full school program called CORE. CORE is not a cute acronym for anything. CORE meant that there was one area of the curriculum which was going to be the glue that held the child's experience together. It was the humanities; in particular, it was history. Through the use of History, or Social Studies as it is called for the younger children, we were going to be able to reach the largest number of our students. We changed the way we grouped the students. I had a group of students that were K-6; there were students arranged in all different conformations. We did not teach "Social Studies." I taught opera—but the Social Studies skill was map studies and cultural studies. The concepts were: How do people get along? What were their laws? What were their governments? How did they bury their dead? How did they feel about living and dying and the value of human life. That was all Social Studies; but I taught it through opera.

We had courses in personal hygiene. We had a course on "Take a Trip around the World" for the sixth graders. They had to go from where they were in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to different countries and become aware of how the countries functioned and how they would function within the country.

The year after that, we decided that had worked so well that we would go to a program that we called "Early Intervention." Early Intervention was a combination of a curricular program and a guidance program. We found that our students were not succeeding, not because they were unable to succeed, but because they had not been given the tools with which to succeed. We felt that the way Special Services were delivered was wrong. We would wait until a child was in fifth or sixth grade before we did some heavy duty intervention. By then we had

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wasted a lot of time, and the child's school experience was generally not a positive one and very difficult to change or to redirect. So we decided through a number of projects that we would go into an early intervention mode which included a curricular revision mode.

[Booklet II] is a very sophisticated booklet. We have learned a lot in one year. The first thing we learned was how to fund such a project. We learned how to get grants. We learned how to appeal to the local business community. We learned to go to Sears. (Sears has incredible assets, including people they are willing to give on loan, if you ask. People came to the school and shared expertise and were paid by Sears to do this!)

It was amazing what happened because we learned; we learned what we needed to know in order to serve our children better than we were doing it before.

What happened for children was amazing. We did three types of evaluation. We did a formal evaluation at summer school. We did a teacher evaluation of how they perceived the project. We did a parent evaluation of what kind of things they saw happening for their children. We also did a wonderful child evaluation, including kindergarten children drawing happy or sad faces to answer questions. We also found a serendipitous evaluation. We did this project for three years. We never once addressed, and I can tell you this is the truth, we never once looked at a test booklet. At the end of the third year I cried at my desk when I got the results back, because not one child in the third or fifth grade who had taken the CTBS test fell below the mean. And yet we did not address formal testing at all. So there are these evaluations that are good. There are these serendipitous spinoffs, joys that you don't realize when you begin to look at what your children really need.

The project is flexible. I have left; I have been out of that school for two years. It continues. Longevity is built in because it is flexible in that, as our student population in the school has changed and as the staff has grown, the desire to continue learnipg in that manner is still there.

Hindsight and experience tell me that it works. We made a lot of mistakes. I did a lot of rethinking and maybe that's a necessary part of our own growth; maybe that's what Sandra Okura is talking about when she says that it's not something we should be afraid of. It's not something that we've been led to be comfortable with, however, but it may be something we need to develop. Scholarship, curriculum ownership, and success are for the children. And I think that this is what this ACLS project is about. I think it's learning for everyone. Certainly you're going to have a wonderful learning experience.

My participation in the project has been very bittersweet. It's bitter because I hate to think that our schooling institutions have gotten to the point where we have to have a project like this to bring scholarship into schools, when it should be the natural way that schools operate. It is very sweet because now we have a project and now we are beginning to really look at scholarship and the influence that you as scholars will have on your own school communities. (It is probably not measurable in any way.)

All of this is to say I think you'll have a wonderful year. I think it'll be challenging. I think it'll be exciting. And above all, I hope it will passionate. Thank you.

Robert Stein: I'd like to invite you now to question any of the panelists.

Questioner: What's this have to do with kids who are at risk; what's it have to do with kids who may not make it to college or university; what's it have to do with employment and getting work and those kinds of issues?

Robert Stein: Does anyone want to take that on?

Sandra Okura: I have two responses to that. One is that we at our school are developing a new strand of team teaching that incorporates technical training right into it, and that's just been launched this year. So ask me next year how it went.

And the other is that I think of the skills that the students are learning in this program: critical thinking, collaborative work. That last is really emphasized in our program—not only collaboration among the teachers, but among the students as well. These are really valuable skills that they take away from high school to whatever situation they find themselves in.

Sandra Sanchez Purrington: I'd like to look at that from the elementary standpoint. You know in elementary school very often what happens to students who are identified as being at risk (even at that age) is that the really good "stuff" is saved for enrichment students. They get the worst possible stuff. Why would students want to continue if that's what they're going to get? I think that as a teacher my standpoint would be, if this child can only learn one thing today, I want it to be

something worth learning. I'm not sure that a lot of the remediation and that a lot of the skills training that we do with students is worth learning. And I think that that is a basic issue that every teacher has to resolve in their own classroom.

Robert Stein: I'd also like to respond. I think we're all at risk from birth to death. And I think there are a great many assumptions around teaching and learning. And some people assume it's a given thing for certain children to have this inherent capability to inquire, to think, to read, to write, to analyze, to interact, to understand the global and the cultural perceptions, to reason — you know, those are what businesses want. People who can think and people who can work cooperatively. There are three main reasons they lose jobs. Every study will tell you this.

The number one reason you're fired is attendance, or lack of. Not showing up to work on time. You can learn that in the schools; I tell my children that you get here on time and focus on learning, you are about one-third of the way there towards employment.

The second reason people don't keep jobs is that they can't work with others. They don't get along with co-workers. They're arrogant, narrow-minded, stubborn, rude, just like us. And in the work world you can't run to your classroom, walk in in September and walk out in June. You're surrounded by colleagues and co-workers and department heads.

The third reason is the inability to learn the skills the corporation wants you to have. And so their prerequisite for kids is to be able to read and write and analyze and think and interact and work with others collaboratively. I would think that if you focus on the same high level you would give to any child and teach as well as we taught the top 15 percent to all children, that they would be ready for any job.

Sandra Blackman: I was just going to say that I have trouble responding to that question at all, because it never arises at our school site. Isn't that weird? And I think the reason is that we have all our students—the gifted and talented students, the special education students, and everybody—all taking the advanced curriculum. We try and prepare everybody; that's why we don't get a conflict.

Questioner: It seems to me that the one common denominator to be successful is shared decision-making.

Sandra Sanchez Purrington: I'd like to start with it. Let me say that when we started at Sweeney we did not have any changes in staff. And I need to be very frank with you and say that not everybody participated. What we did do is we continued, no matter what anyone said, with what we thought was the right thing. We did not force anybody to join us, and there were people who sat in their classrooms with their arms folded and said, "If I just sit here long enough, all these crazies will go away." After five years, there aren't any people with their arms folded. Three left; they said, "I can't do this, this is not my way, I cannot stay here." Two people who were very, very against any changes have now become leaders in the project. They waited. They found the place where they fit and they became leaders. The new people who were hired on were hired in committee. (We do everything by committee.) They were hired on in committee, and we did ask those questions: Why do you want to come here? What can you bring to our students? What can you bring to our staff? How are you going to develop yourself? How are you going to help us develop ourselves?" Those questions were for people who hired on after the project started.

But at the beginning it is an issue of being committed. You know the first graders can get very stubborn and they wait for you to give up. And we usually do. Sometimes it just takes people who are so passionate about the changes that they can make and the effect that that can have that they are not deterred from the path—no matter what happens around them.

Sandra Okura: We have been fortunate at my school to have the support of the administration. Our administration has seen real positive results from the work that we are doing, and therefore has been hiring people with enthusiasm for collaborative teaching. And also we have gone to an interview format, and over the summer they have asked me to sit in on interviews of potential new teachers to represent what our interests as a team teaching program are. But something happened last week that kind of responds to your question. Last week I got a phone call from a teacher to whom I've never really spoken. She's going to retire next year, and she told me she was working on her curriculum for the coming year. She was excited about what she saw happening with the Humanitas program, and she asked me to work with her to give her ideas on how to use cooperative learning, how to work with a partner. I never would have seen her as a team player, as a possible team member. So there are people who care passionately, who are not young and enthusiastic, and I feel that this disproves the negative stereotype of teachers and shows that they really do care about what they are doing and I think will grab the opportunity to do better.

Robert Stein: You ask a critical question and I'll also address it from my own experience, from an urban city point of view. At our school the teachers and their families select each other (bound by the rules of unions and bound by the rules of the Personnel Division). In California there are two very important initiatives—one has taken place; one might take place. One is a voucher initiative—I understand Colorado is also going through that—which will be voted on by the California electorate in November. Public schools' response may be too late to the voucher choice response. It may pass. The other one has already passed, which is the charter school initiative, which says that one hundred California schools can withdraw from the public school systems and have complete autonomy to do whatever they want and to waive all state-aid codes, city policies, and procedures. (As long as you are somewhat morally correct.) My school is writing that charter application now. And the primary reason to write that now is the issue of teaching. It comes around to the issue of teaching. But you have to be careful in the same way that if we track children, we also have to track teachers. The stereotypes and the prejudices we have laid upon the victims, the children, we've also laid upon the teachers. And some of us look at each other as if our stuff don't stink and I'm a better teacher than you and I am more of a scholar than you, and I'm not so sure we want to trust each other to judge each other to place each other. I think we have to be able to touch our minds and hearts to understand as a teacher the most important thing in any place called school. As teachers, do we honor each other in the same way we would honor our children and believe that we all can learn? And do we believe that we can learn to be collaborative, to co-plan a curriculum or whatever it may be, to work under the stress of teaching and learning and children and adolescence in areas where there is less money, not more, more demands, not fewer, because we have a belief in teaching children. That's the critical miracle we have to try and find out and then have the guts or the system to eliminate those of us, who have already died but haven't been buried yet.

Questioner: I would like to ask of Miss Okura, you said that you had to rethink the way that you approach American literature. I would like to know what that thought process involves and what works you chose.

Sandra Okura: Oh my. Well, the way I was accustomed to teaching American literature was very chronological. Then I was teaching thematically with an art teacher, a history teacher, and that darned biology teacher. What we did in our initial planning stages was

brainstorm: we each came in and said what we individually needed to teach and wanted to teach in our separate subject areas. We just put them up there on the chalkboard and then we began to make groupings and began to group ideas according to theme; what common concepts and umbrella ideas would cover and unite us. And so then I was teaching things out of chronological order, but things that were unwinding themselves thematically to my teammates. What I've taught is constantly changing and is going to undergo radical changes. I go back into the classroom next week to incorporate a lot more multicultural literature. And are you at high school level?

Questioner: Yes I am.

Sandra Okura: Good. Maybe we can talk more about the specifics then when we meet at grade level. But I was very excited over the past year to expand and redefine my concept of what American literature is.

Robert Stein: Thank you. That's an excellent transition. I'd like to thank Sandra, Sandra, and Sandra, and would you like to thank them too?

[Applause.]

Transformations in the Humanities

Stanley Chodorow
University of California, San Diego

It is exceedingly difficult to carry out the task Michael Holzman set for me when he invited me to summarize developments in the humanities during the last quarter century or so. The problem is this: The developments are bewildering, and there is no way to describe them in under four hundred pages; indeed a recent attempt, *Redrawing the Boundaries*,[1] which deals only with literary studies, took nearly six hundred. The bewilderment stems from the multiplicity of critical stances or approaches now being taken, from the nature of the language in which their practitioners describe their enterprises and ideas, and from the fact that the approaches are still changing rapidly even as scholars coin names for them. As a result, those engaged in the various programs of critical inquiry are sensitive about any attempt to describe their enterprise in plain English, which they view as an act of reductionism, if not of aggression.

Before launching into my aggressive, reductionist introduction to the character and preoccupations of contemporary humanistic scholarship, I want to sort out some issues. First, I will concentrate on history and literature, because philosophy is not a subject taught in primary and secondary schools.

This is not to say that philosophy is stagnant. At the moment, its surface is roiled by very interesting controversies about the relevance of the findings in the neurosciences to ancient philosophical problems like the nature of mind. Likewise, science has become the model for explorations of epistemological and metaphysical questions. And all of this is controversial. Traditionalists insist on the relevance of the study of the great philosophers and on the traditional approaches to such problems as mind and epistemology, while the radicals, if I can call them that, are eagerly taking a fresh look at these problems through the study of the sciences.

The one thing nearly all philosophers agree on is the one thing, in my opinion, that you have to worry about—that is, that philosophical investigation rests on the making and analysis of arguments. If you teach your students anything about philosophy, let it be how to make and analyze an argument; everything we do in the academy depends on that skill and, more importantly, on the acceptance of the notion that common knowledge—that is, knowledge that all can obtain or accept

by the use of reason—is a product of arguments about evidence and its meaning.

Second, though I want to acknowledge the controversial nature of contemporary humanistic scholarship, I do not want to concentrate on the politics of those controversies, at least the politics within the academy. But I do want to characterize the underlying intellectual debate. Very roughly speaking, the controversies in history and literature have centered on the problem of objectivity. In historical scholarship, this is a very old issue. Thucydides claimed to be writing objective history—"a history for all times"—in an implied slap at Herodotus and other "romantic" historians, and modern historians have worried a good deal about the epistemological problems of their craft. Even during the century and a half when historians took it for granted that what they discovered through research was objectively true—that it was possible to write definitive histories—they were often concerned about how a historian, who was necessarily a person embedded in time and place, could extract him- or herself from quotidian concerns to recreate a true portrait of the past.[2] When I ask historical questions, don't I ask them from a point of view and with a set of concerns that reflect my own situation? Put another way, the writing and reading of history are human activities connected in some way with other aspects of our lives—otherwise, it is hard to imagine why we would engage in them. To what extent do those other aspects of our lives affect the way we write history?

In literary studies, the question of objectivity is fresher, which is no surprise because the discipline is younger. That is not to say that philology is young—it originated in Alexandria in the third century BC—but that literary criticism as an academic subject is relatively young. It came into being in the second half of the nineteenth century as an act of rebellion against the tyranny of the classics. The question at the time was whether modern literature—that is, anything written after about AD 400, but mostly the literature of the sixteenth to nineteenth century—merited formal study. Reading it was fine; enjoying it was almost fine; but did it deserve a place in the curriculum? The traditionalists thought that the study of Greek and Latin literature, or really the study of grammar (for they only read selections from the classics and concentrated entirely on matters of linguistic analysis) would produce educated people, who could then indulge in intelligent recreation by reading contemporary literature. The radicals pointed out that the study of grammar was not the study of literature, that students did not really acquire the ability to read Greek and Latin, and that the methods of study had positively harmful effects on the students' ability

to enjoy and judge literature of any kind. In 1883, the radicals created the Modern Language Association to promote the study of modern languages and literature. In the 1890s, some of them ventured to create courses on contemporary literature (*Jude the Obscure*, *Puddin'-head Wilson*, etc.) and some survived; most who even thought of doing that were fired by their senior colleagues.[5]

I see that while I am supposed to be looking at recent developments, true to my profession, I have started by looking back beyond the present age. Let me continue in that vein for a moment, because I take it as a given that the retrospective is the necessary basis of the prospective view.

As literary study entered the university, it followed tradition at least in so far as it concentrated on the historical approach. The main aims of literary study were the establishment of a history of literature and the development of criteria for distinguishing "good" from "bad" works. Indeed, what might be called connoisseurship was an important aspect of early modernist studies in literature. One exponent said that he wanted to "send into [the] public, to serve as leaven, men who know good work from bad and who know why they know it."[6]

The dual aims of literary study led to the formation of two schools, the historical and what became known as New Criticism. The former arose from philology and concentrated on the historical relationships and order of literary works. The literary canon derived from historicist scholarship that applied criteria of greatness to winnow the literary production of the past and to produce a genealogy of works that exemplified the characteristics of civilization. (In that imperialist age, civilization was singular, a universal culture to which all peoples might aspire.)

New Criticism seems connected to connoisseurship. It proposed to treat literary works as artistic objects and to study them in close detail. As a result, it tended to formalist studies, such as the study of poetics, but its salient feature was its *a*historical approach. For the New Critics, literary works, like masterworks of visual arts or music, had a universal, timeless significance; they represented what it meant to be human, not what it meant to be any particular human being embedded in time and place. Consequently, the historical context or the relationship of great works to other forms of writing or cultural artifacts were of trivial significance compared with the appreciation of their qualities as masterpieces. They were worth study for their own sake.

It is amazing that in the period following World War II, the proponents of these two traditions of literary study joined forces to

propound a curriculum. This curriculum was based on a canon of great works—thus connected to the historicist tradition—and taught close reading of texts—thus a product of New Criticism. The unifying theory of this tradition of literary scholarship and teaching was "scientific" in the sense that it believed it possible to apply objective criteria to literature to produce clear enough distinctions of quality. It was scientific also in believing that reading great works closely would reveal the essentials of human nature as understood by civilized people.[5]

I won't go into all the variants that clustered around this core curriculum of research and teaching—exegetical, psychoanalytic, and so forth—but of course different approaches were possible within the overarching theory that supported the canonical tradition. The important thing here is not the argument about which works should be part of the canon—as supporters of the canonical tradition point out, there has been constant battle over that issue—but that *a* canon is representative of civilization, which is singular and unique. (Once imperialism became less acceptable, this point was revised to recognize the existence of civilizations other than western or European, so a canon became the representative or bearer of the civilization that produced it, and scholars recognized at least three civilizations—"western," Islamic, and Chinese—each with its canon.)

Contemporary literary scholarship takes its stand in opposition to the canonical tradition, in its singular or multiple form. The new scholarship arises from a rejection of the notion that criteria of quality are universal and *a*historical (or as most literary scholars would put it *a*cultural). It starts from the proposition that all criteria of judgment are culturally generated and manifest the culture that produces them. Moreover, culture is not a singular or uniform and static thing, but a product of various, co-existing social relationships. At its most extreme, this view of culture would make each person a separate cultural entity, our individual cultures constantly being revised or changed by interactions with others. For the most part, however, the talk about cultural formation and character in contemporary scholarship resolves its focus on groups rather than individuals.

The sources of the counter-canonical view have not been fully revealed—or perhaps one should say that they have not fully revealed themselves—but some seem obvious. On the intellectual plane, the view of culture propounded in the seventies by the anthropologist Clifford Geertz has played a large role.[6] Geertz reacted to the scientific model of anthropological research, which aimed at finding laws of social behavior and the universal elements of humanness. Anthropologists had long been concerned with the effect that the observer had on

the quality of the data he or she collected in this enterprise, but Geertz wanted to take a step beyond the effort to define, distinguish, and therefore neutralize the observer's effect. He argued that the observer is necessarily a part of the data observed.

For Geertz, the anthropologist is a reader, an interpreter, of the culture he or she studies, and the culture is like a text. Just as the reader affects the meaning of a literary text—that is, just as the reader's interests, point of view, and cultural character determine the meaning of the literary text for that reader—so the anthropologist affects the meaning of alien cultures. As such the interpretation of culture can be heuristic, but it can't be true in the sense of scientifically true—the same for everyone. One anthropologist's reading of a culture may help others to read—may contribute to the knowledge and perceptiveness of other readers—but it will not constitute a description of that culture forevermore.

One can see immediately that Geertzian anthropology, which is strongly opposed by most anthropologists, undermines the notion that there are objective criteria of judgment out there that you and I can appropriate and apply to literature to produce an objective judgment or knowledge. But, also in the seventies, other, non-intellectual movements similarly undermined the prevailing notions of literary scholarship.

Perhaps the first of these movements to affect scholarship was feminism. In 1970, following the brilliant, lonely example of Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett published her *Sexual Politics* and started the feminist revolution in scholarship. Very advanced, and very few, women had already begun to see that the civilization represented in the literary canon and in the scholarship about it excluded women writers and the woman's point of view, but Millett got the attention of a broad audience and started a heated debate that has only recently begun to cool.

This revolution rested on two main arguments: First, what is called culture is based on power relationships within a society. Each distinct class or group in the society has its culture, but the one identified as *the* culture of the society is the one produced by the dominant group. For the feminists, the culture represented by the literary canon was male, but you can see that any group could use this argument. For African-Americans, the culture was white; for African-American women, white and male; and so on. The argument emerged from the recognition by African-Americans during the sixties and by women during the seventies that the culture or civilization the academy identified as American in American Studies Programs excluded many groups in American

society. I think that the women were the first to see the intellectual consequences of this recognition, but since the seventies all groups that have seen themselves as excluded have joined the intellectual revolution feminism engendered. And all have asked: Where do our cultures fit in and contribute to American culture?

The second argument of the feminist resistance was that what a literary work is depends on who is reading it. The earliest feminist work, such as that by Carolyn Heilbron in the fifties, read canonical works from a woman's point of view. Once the revolution got going, African-Americans, Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, gays and lesbians, everyone who could place themselves in a distinctive group began reading works from what they argued was their particular cultural perspective. This enterprise was fueled by the development of reader-response theory, which holds that a work is a product of the text and its reader. It is different for each reader, and for the aggregate of readers it is different over time and from place to place. A work of literature is no longer an object, out there, to be analyzed, appreciated, worshipped, whatever. It is a negotiated result of an interaction between its text and a reader and as such it is a living thing, enlivened by the reader's heart and mind.

What one can see in this sketchy history of literary studies is a transition from an art historical enterprise to a cultural studies enterprise. The canon was a canon of literary art, and aesthetic judgments and arguments were a constant feature of literary scholarship and discourse. In its new mode, literary studies are concerned with the way literature represents and contributes to culture, which in turn is viewed as an exceedingly complex conglomerate of dominant and subject or oppressed subcultures. If the establishment of the canon was an act of cultural domination, then the interesting question is: What role did it play, or did its establishment play, in the negotiations among the cultures in the society whose values and aesthetic judgments it purported to represent? And what is asked about the canon can be asked about the works of literature on it. What role did they play in the culture of their time and in the subsequent cultures in which they played a role? One cannot answer this question without reading "around" the canonical work and without seeking to understand the complexities of olden cultures, so it is inevitable that literary studies based on the Geertzian idea of culture and on the cultural politics of contemporary American society would become cultural studies. (It should be pointed out that literary scholars engaged in cultural studies still read and teach works that were in the canon, but not because they are masterpieces—a category some of them would reject altogether—

but because they were exceptionally rich representations of and contributors to culture.)

Finally, if literary works and their readers are not objects that can be precisely and definitively defined, then one has to find a way to describe their basic characteristics in relation to how they are produced. Cultural studies argues, therefore, that what a work of literature is and who a reader is—that is, what he or she brings to the work of reading—is culturally generated. Culture, not the law of nature, produces the persons and the objects they read or use or study. Yes, males are biologically different from females, but what is significant and useful in understanding human society and human beings is that manhood is culturally different from womanhood. Perhaps the best way to state this basic point is that culture produces the significant characteristics of men, women, European-Americans, African-Americans, and all of the other hyphenated Americans you can think of. A corollary is that cultural difference does not derive from biological or other physical difference and is not, therefore, inevitable, unless cultures are innate.[7]

Nearly all of the main approaches to literature now used in American universities fit into the general rubric of cultural studies. Feminist criticism takes as its starting point the view that women have been oppressed and that the recovery of women's history and literature and the feminist reading of all literature will establish an independence and equality for women. Gender studies, which derives from women's studies, takes the somewhat broader view that gender is a cultural construct and that it is one of the determining categories of personal, social, and cultural life. How you read literature depends on gender, a complex cultural element of identity. African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American, and Native American studies proceed from a similar view: While the categories they study are partly biological, the most significant aspects of difference are cultural.

The most popular or widest spread form of cultural studies is the new historicism. The old historicism focused on the primary task of writing a literary history from which a canon of great works emerged as the central tradition of civilization and on the subsidiary task of establishing authentic texts of the great works, which then could be studied for what they revealed of the intellectual and artistic tradition. The new historicism begins with the axiom that culture is a web of connecting elements (Geertz's image). Each group in the society has its particular form of culture and because of the material processes of the society—the politics, economy, and other commonalities—every element of the web is connected with every other. Consequently, the analysis of any one component constitutes a contribution to the analysis of any other.

Moreover, every element of the culture is affected by its connection to the others and proper study will reveal the connections—the study of the parts revealing a sense of the whole. The new historicists study literature as a manifestation of culture and as a participant in cultural formation.

As a result, they have seized on Roland Barthes's famous announcement of "The Death of the Author" and on Michel Foucault's question, "What is an Author?" Foucault argued that the idea of the author, the unique creator of a work of literature, was a historical construct, the product of nineteenth-century liberal ideology and its cult of the individual (which also produced the modern view that what gave rise to and defined the Italian Renaissance was the discovery of the idea of the individual). Barthes and Foucault argued that both the author and his or her work were products of culture and that it was really impossible to extract the author from his or her surrounding milieu and to separate out the particular, individual intentions or the independent choices of the author from the welter of cultural conflict or contention in which he or she existed and wrote. The new historicists have taken it upon themselves to analyze that cultural milieu and to produce a discursive description of literary works in place of the old historicist discrete description. The new historicist buries literature in its culture and looks at the culture in and around the works he or she studies. The old historicist extracted the work from its place and held it up for viewing as an object of universal, timeless significance.

The idea of the web of culture does not imply any particular kind of relationship between and among the elements of a culture, but the new historicists have accepted the premise of their forebears among the feminists, African-Americanists, and others that those relationships are basically power relationships. Consequently, new historicism politicizes literature in the sense that it takes political relationships to be the most significant, the basic, type. The idea of politics implied by this stance is an old one. It views the relationships among social groups—classes, genders, ethnic groups—as political, because it takes their relationships to be power relationships and politics is about power. This is politics as Aristotle thought about it, concerned with the structure of society rather than with the decisions a community might make about this or that issue.

In sum, what you will find in your literary studies this year will be a variety of approaches that mostly share the cultural studies point of view. You will also find scholars who hold fast to the basic ideas of the New Criticism and the old historicism. The conflict between the two

points of view is often bitter, and as many of you will have noticed it is also not purely academic.

One of the ironies of the situation of literary studies in the United States is that the society seems to care so little about it—if the amount of money devoted to it is a fair measure—but that politicians are constantly talking about its evil influence. In part, this anomaly stems from the fact that literature belongs to everyone, so it is a common possession that the politicians can exploit for their own ends. In part, it arises from a concern for the community. In the post-World War II era, the civilization held up in the canon and the idea that the purpose of instruction in literature was to educate readers to a common point of view and pride in that civilization was taken to be one of the commonalities of American society. Cultural studies threatens that commonality, without providing any replacement. So we humanists can be accused of contributing to, if not causing, the disintegration of society, and that is something politicians can exploit.

Let's turn to historical studies. In a sense, they both preceded and followed literary studies in the move toward cultural studies. As everyone knows, historical studies went through a revolution during the nineteenth century, a revolution usually associated with the name of Leopold von Ranke: Scientific history would establish the definitive truth about the past; the task of historians was to find the facts, which were waiting there for the finding and which would speak for themselves.[8]

The triumph of positivism in historical research was also a triumph of Thucydides over Herodotus—that is, the triumph of history as the study of human affairs (one should say the affairs of men) over the study of past societies and cultural mores, for Herodotus was interested in culture more than in events. Thus, a century after von Ranke, when I was a graduate student in history, politics and ideas were still the principal subjects of historical scholarship and study.

But the shift had already begun. In the late thirties, a group of young historians led by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch began to develop a new historiography, focused on social history and on culture. This was the Annales school, named for its journal, *Annales: Économies, Sociétés, Civilisations* (founded in 1938). After World War II, this school slowly emerged as dominant in France, principally as a result of the scholarly achievements of Febvre, Fernand Braudel, Emanuel LeRoi Laduric, Georges Duby, and Jacques Le Goff.[9] By the fifties the influence of the Annales school had begun to spread, leading to the foundation of new journals—the English journal *Past and Present* was founded in 1952—

and to a fundamental shift in western historiography. We might say that we are now moving into the age of Herodotus.

Historical studies have also been affected by the political movements that engendered cultural studies—feminism and the civil rights movement that spawned ethnic studies. The previous move into social history made young historians highly receptive to the new women's studies, African-American Studies, and other group studies, though to establish their new scholarship in departments of history took a half a generation of hard struggle.[10]

Historians have not, generally, joined the cultural studies movement, because, I think, they cannot accept one of the basic ideas of the Geertzian approach to culture. History focuses on change, which means on causal relationships and chronology. Cultural studies, even in its new historicist form, focuses on relationships that are not causal. The question for new historicism is: How do the elements of a culture relate to and affect one another? For the new historicist, culture is multicultural, a kaleidoscope of shifting, colored chips that reflect on one another, affecting the way we perceive them.[11] Historians may also be interested in relationships, but only because they affect the development of something—an institution, a cultural attitude, an idea—over time. Historical work implies that there is a *something* to be explained. Cultural studies has made every *something*—even literary texts—permanently contingent and thus forever imprecise.

But when you delve into historical studies this year you will find that they have much in common with cultural studies. Many historians—particularly feminists, African-Americans, Hispanics, Asian-Americans and Native Americans—are like their counterparts in literary studies in viewing culture as a product of contestation between dominant and subject or oppressed groups. Consequently, you will find a large number of engaged historians who think that their studies are about political struggles and contribute to political struggles. But in historical studies the willingness to consider the historical significance of previously ignored groups has less often led to the politicization of the subject in the sense that all relationships are read as political in nature.

As I noted earlier, the notion that all elements of a culture are connected as in a web does not necessitate that the connections are political in every instance. That was the statement of a mainstream historian who is skeptical of the claim that politics explain all. I, for one, worry that what explains everything explains nothing, but because I'm willing and because I'm a dean and have an obligation to remain open-minded I am engaged in endless discussions of this issue, and I should characterize my view as my *current* view.

It is appropriate that I have ended this short discourse with a revelation of the self, for a hyper-consciousness of the self is at the center of modern humanistic work. What I have tried to explain is that this egocentricity is not a self-indulgent doodling producing an elaborate and abstruse study of the navel. It is philosophically based and has important things to say about how our society and culture has formed in the past and is forming now. That is what the politicians recognize and what they don't much like.

Notes

1. Greenblatt, Stephen, *Redrawing the Boundaries: The Transformations of English and American Literary Studies* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1992).

2. For example, R.G. Collingwood proposed that the historian had to place himself, by an act of imagination, in the time and place about which he wrote. See *The Idea of History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), based on lectures given in 1936. Collingwood was trying to provide a basis for the claim that history was an objective science. The attitude of historians of the late nineteenth century is nicely illustrated by Fustel de Coulanges, famous for his history of the ancient city, who, when his students gave him an ovation after a lecture, is reported to have waived his hand modestly and said, "It is not I but History who speaks."

3. For an account of the way American universities taught the classics and of the rebellion against that tradition, see Graff, Gerald, *Professing Literature: An Institutional History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

4. Spoken by Bliss Perry of Williams College, quoted in Graff: 125.

5. Literary study was, therefore, related to anthropology, which also aimed at an understanding of human nature, though by the study of "primitive" peoples instead of through the literature that represented, while it demonstrated the highest development of human character, the civilized state.

6. See Geertz, Clifford, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

7. Some might argue that culture is a "natural" product of the human creature, but those engaged in cultural studies would respond that the character of the culture produced is not biologically determined. Put another way, culture might be natural to human beings, but the

character of any particular culture arises from social and political processes.

8. The story of Fustel de Coulanges related earlier (note 2) represents the confidence of this movement.

9. Marc Bloch died in a Nazi concentration camp in 1944.

10. On the relation of that struggle to the objectivity question, see Novick, Peter, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

11. Multiculturalism is not, therefore, merely an expression of identity politics but has a philosophical underpinning also. These sources of multiculturalism may strengthen one another, but I am not certain anyone has looked at that aspect of the movement.

ACLS National Education Conference
Aspen Institute, Aspen, Colorado
August 27-29, 1993

Agenda

Friday, August 27

6:00 p.m. Reception

7:00 p.m. Dinner

Welcomes: Ellen Wert, Pew Charitable Trusts

"Humanities and the Public Schools"
Richard Ohmann

Saturday, August 28

9:00 a.m. Panel Discussion on School-Based Curriculum Development

Sandra Blackman
Sandra Okura
Sandra Sanchez Purrington
Robert Stein, Chair

10:30 a.m. Session I: Cross-Site School Level, Central Office Meetings with Panelists, and University Meetings

12:00 noon Lunch

"Schools for All Students"
Robert Stein

2:00 p.m. Session II: Teaching Issues by Sites

5:00 p.m. Session III: Workshop Participant Meetings

7:00 p.m. Dinner

"Transformations in the Humanities"
Stanley Chodorow

(Continued)

Sunday, August 29

9:00 a.m.	Session IV: School and District Level Meetings
11:00 a.m.	Reports
12:00 noon	Lunch

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Participants

ACLS, Speakers, and Guests

Sandra Blackman
Marston Middle School
San Diego, CA 92117

Stanley Chodorow
University of California, San Diego
San Diego, CA 92093

Patricio Cordoba
Summit
Denver Public Education Coalition
1410 Grant Street, Suite A 101
Denver, CO 80203

Angela Covert
Atlantic Philanthropic Services
521 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10175

Paul Fideler
Lesley College
Cambridge, MA 02138

Lois Feuer
Department of English
California State University
Dominguez Hills
Carson, CA 90747

Abraham S. Fischler and
Shirley Fischler
Nova University
3301 College Avenue
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33314

David Florio
National Academy of Sciences
2001 Wisconsin Avenue
Washington, DC 20418

Gloria Higgins
JFM Foundation
P.O. Box 5085
Denver, CO 80217

Michael Holzman
ACLS
228 East 45th Street
New York, NY 10017

Kate Massey
Department of English
and Foreign Languages
California State Polytechnic University
Pomona, CA 91768

James R. Millar
George Washington University
2130 H Street, N.W. #601
Washington, DC 20052

Richard Ohmann
Center for Humanities
Wesleyan University
Middletown, CT 06457

Sandra Okura
Humanitas
315 West 9th Street
Los Angeles, CA 90015

Sandra Sanchez Purrington
Route 9, Box 86
Santa Fe, NM 87505

Edward Rocklin
Department of English
and Foreign Languages
California State Polytechnic University
Pomona, CA 91768

Robert Stein
O'Farrell Community School
San Diego, CA 92114

Thomas C. Stokes
Gates Foundation
3200 Cherry Creek South Drive
Denver, CO 80209

Ellen Wert
Pew Charitable Trusts
2005 Market Street, Suite 1700
Philadelphia, PA 19103

Carol Wilson
Colorado Partnership for
Educational Renewal
574 West 6th Avenue
Denver, CO 80204

Boulder Valley Public Schools

Ann Cornfield
Magnolia Route
Nederland, CO 80466

Randolph J. Cummings
600 Lois Drive
Louisville, CO 80027

Dean Damon
Boulder Valley Public Schools
Boulder, CO 80301

Ed Ellis
Nederland Junior/Senior High
School
Nederland, CO 80466

Elizabeth Evans
213 Seminole Drive
Boulder, CO 80303

Kathi M. Fethke
4571 Tally Ho Trail
Boulder, CO 80301

Tammy Forrest
P.O. Box 144
Nederland, CO 80466

Johanna Gangemi
Salina Start Route
Boulder, CO 80302

Molly Gardner
1515 7th Street
Boulder, CO 80302

Matthew Greenman
2877 Moorhead
Boulder, CO 80302

Harry Kennedy
2100 Floral Drive
Boulder, CO 80304

Holly Kyed
2945 13th Street
Boulder, CO 80304

James Martin
84 Sundown Trail
Nederland, CO 80466

Patricia Maslowski
P.O. Box 135
Nederland, CO 80466

Judy Newton
341 West 3rd Street
Nederland, CO 80466

Jean Nuttall
21 A Centaur Court
Lafayette, CO 80026

Jim Pederson
1040 Dellwood Avenue
Boulder, CO 80302

Betty Reiss
1166 Mapleton Avenue
Boulder, CO 80302

Jude Sacry
213 Acadia Avenue
Lafayette, CO 80026

Carla Santorno
Boulder Valley Public Schools
Boulder, CO 80301

Ellen Smith
4013 Wonderland Hill Avenue
Boulder, CO 80304

Jay Spidel
2354 Smith Court
Longmount, CO 80501

Lee Swanson
506 S. Whitcomb
Fort Collins, CO 80521

Christopher Sweeney
2318 Mapleton
Boulder, CO 80302

Lonna Vandervort
3522 Smuggler Way
Boulder, CO 80303

David Yeager
Boulder Valley Public Schools
Boulder, CO 80301

Jaye Zola
125 S. 34th Street
Boulder, CO 80303

Brookline Public Schools

Henry Bolter
Brookline Public Schools
Brookline, MA 02146

Deanne Dixon
34 Thirteenth Street
Lowell, MA 01850

Esther Kattef
82 Gayland Road
Needham, MA 02192

Renee McKinney
34 Carolina Avenue, #2
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

Patricia Manhard
3 Stetson Street
Lexington, MA 02173

Angela Nielson
Brookline Public Schools
Brookline, MA 02146

Eileen Reynolds
65 Colony Road
Lexington, MA 02173

Clare Ringwall
403 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720

Barbara Scotto
26 Crowninshield Road
Brookline, MA 02146

Richard Young
117 Beach Street
Quincy, MA 02144

Cambridge Public Schools

Marcia Baynes
15 Banfield Avenue
Mattapan, MA 02120

Sandra Dickerson
P.O. Box 390618
Cambridge, MA 02139

Barbara Fox
116 Monument Street
West Medford, MA 02155

Elizabeth Grady
20 Faneuil Street
Brighton, MA 02135

Robin Gile Litwin
54 Prescott Road
Concord, MA 01742

Mary Lou McGrath
Cambridge Public Schools
Cambridge, MA 02138

Albert Newton
P.O. Box 512
Maynard, MA 01754

Joan Soble
36 Linnaean Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Sandra Spooner
Cambridge Public Schools
Cambridge, MA 02138

John Toomey
309 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139

Cherry Creek Public Schools

Marybeth Anderson
5758 N. Lariot Drive
Castle Rock, CO 80104

Tamara Hoffman
2432 S. Birch
Denver, CO 80222

Mikee Kapelke
3350 S. Locust
Denver, CO 80222

Julie B. McCorry
2941 E. Colorado Avenue
Denver, CO 80210

Marcia Sandman
6333 S. Hanover
Englewood, CO 80111

B. J. Utech
9816 Crestline
Englewood, CO 80111

Weld Public Schools

Linda Gleason
2936 Lake Park
Longmont, CO 80503

Judith Kiefer
2920 West C Street
Greeley, CO 80631

Patricia Schaffer
2758 24th Street
Greeley, CO 80631

R. Scott Wallace
3813 W 6th Street
Greeley, CO 80634

Denver Public Schools

Rose Arvin
724 Old Stone Drive
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126

Jane Baldwin
7109 W. Fairview Drive
Littleton, CO 80123

Eugenia Sarmiento-Barnes
6495 Happy Canyon Road #5
Denver, CO 80237

Melanie H. Byers
1563 Eudora Street
Denver, CO 80220

Judy Card
7757 E. Nassau Avenue
Denver, CO 80237

Janet Cerrone
977 S. Owens Court
Lakewood, CO 80226

Eve Dennis
Denver Public Schools
Denver, CO 80203

Debra Glenn
3695 S Poplar Street
Denver, CO 80237

Josefina Higa
296 S. Nome
Auruora, CO 80012

Ruth Hillard
8263 Surry Drive
Morrison, CO 80456

Rosita Jiminez
5402 Meade
Denver, CO 80221

Risa Marshall
11996 W. Blacktail Mountain
Littleton, CO 80127

George Straface
Denver Public Schools
Denver, CO 80203

Ardis Strieby
P.O. Box 1112
Evergreen, CO 80439

Harvard University

Vito Perrone
Harvard School of Education
224 Longfellow Hall
13 Appian Way
Cambridge, MA 02138

University of Colorado, Boulder

Phillip DiStefano
College of Education
University of Colorado, Boulder
Boulder, CO 80309

Philip Leland Krauth
Department of English
University of Colorado, Boulder
Boulder, CO 80309

Lee Chambers-Schiller
Department of History
University of Colorado, Boulder
Boulder, CO 80309

David Simpson
Department of English
University of Colorado, Boulder
Boulder, CO 80309

Cathy Lavender Teliha
College of Arts and Sciences
University of Colorado, Boulder
Boulder, CO 80309

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3. *R.M. Lumiansky: Scholar, Teacher, Spokesman for the Humanities*
4. *A Life of Learning* (1988 Charles Homer Haskins Lecture) by John Hope Franklin
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23. *Teaching the Humanities: Essays from the ACLS Elementary and Secondary Schools Teacher Curriculum Development Project*
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